

Listen For Me

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Listen For Me

by [janewithwhy](#)

Summary

She always thought that ghosts weren't living.

Notes

This note was added February 15, 2018: Though I no longer write for this fandom, I feel myself debating whether or not I should orphan these works. For now, I won't. However, this is a companion piece to my other fic "Chase Me Through the Streets of Time" and was only linked together at this time (in 2018). Thanks and enjoy.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

She hops through a window and lands without a sound, smirking at the ease of her infiltration. She crouches and pads softly down the hallway, her leather bound feet sliding against smooth cobblestone with ease and grace. She flattens herself against the wall when the light of a torch passes by the front end of the hallway—the guard never even turns his head.

When she slips into the room she knows she needs to be in, she unsheathes her dagger, careful not to make a sound as she does so. She pauses when she comes upon a sleeping guard; this one is not supposed to be here. A breeze of wind flits through the room from an open window nearby, the guard's long hair hangs lazily in its wake, as if hung in the air by a ghost.

She could leave this one, but if something went awry, she would have to exit back through this room, and she would have to kill her anyway. Fisting the handle of her dagger, she silently stalks over to the guard and with her free hand covers her mouth while at the same time driving her blade straight between two of her ribs, slamming the hilt of her dagger against the woman under her.

Steely blue eyes snap open, staring into her own. She grips tighter around the guard's mouth and twists the pommel, opening the wound, before pulling away. She figures the guard has about twenty more seconds before she bleeds out, and the rupture in her lung should quell any cry she might try to let out.

“Ryuko.”

Her voice echoes down her spine, like some long lost, ancient tone ringing down her vertebrae, coaxing something out of her, tugging and pulling at the core of her being. Nobody should know that name, not here.

Ryuko glances back at the woman, slumped and bleeding, and finds herself waiting, listening. The guard doesn't make another sound, and Ryuko feels her shoulders shake when her eyes finally slip shut.

She completes the mission, but she's so rattled by the feeling that woman's voice gives her that she doesn't see the arrow until it's too late.

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She likes him because he's tactile—because he holds her close when she has nightmares and he'll place a hand upon her when she starts breathing too fast from daydreams that feel too real. He makes her laugh, a lot, and she needed that when they met because she kept feeling like there was something tugging her away from this world.

And it's like he understands her need to run away.

The first time she told him she needed to go, he shrugged and said he'd go with her. He didn't question the intense wanderlust that she felt; he just listened to her when words kept spilling

out of her mouth about how she feels pulled in every direction and if she stayed still for too long, she was sure to break. He can't see, but it doesn't matter. He follows her and she thinks she needs that. So they move, again and again and again.

But it doesn't matter where they go; she never feels at home. Sometimes it's after months, sometimes only after weeks—more than once, she would find herself only wanting to stay for just a day. What is she chasing or running from or looking for or evading? Sometimes she wakes up with a voice in her ear and her heart pounding fast from this recurring nightmare of an arrow lodging itself into her eye. Whenever that happens, they go.

He always wakes her up as soon as the dining car opens—cracks a joke and asks her what she needs, before carefully unfolding his cane and walking down the aisle. The woman across from her keeps sneaking glances and fidgeting with the lens on her camera, and Ryuko thinks it's a little weird, but doesn't say anything about it because she leaves them alone and when she falls asleep Ryuko can't help but return the favor, stealing looks at the woman's short bob and angled cheekbones as the train rocks back and forth through the night.

The conductor comes around to tell them that their stop is coming up on the third day. Ryuko accidentally makes eye contact with the woman as they gather their bags, but doesn't say anything—they offer each other polite smiles, before Ryuko turns toward the exit.

“Wait, excuse me.”

She can't tell if she's being affected by the inertia of the train slowing down, but she suddenly feels like she's immersed in water.

“I—I'm sorry, I'm a traveling photographer. Can I—can I take your picture?”

Even though the woman stutters, Ryuko finds herself drawn to her voice like some song she thinks she once heard, like a melody from her childhood that she can't quite place. Before the silence stretches too long, and hoping that she can coax that voice out of her once more, Ryuko agrees. The woman frames her and then snaps the photo, the shutter of her camera snapping hard.

“Thank you,” she says, in almost a whisper. Ryuko's about to say something when a gruff voice pulls her out of her reverie.

“C'mon, babe, we gotta go! Don't leave a blind guy hanging!”

When she turns back, the woman is busying herself with rewinding the film in her camera. Ryuko hesitates and it isn't until she's off of the train and standing in another station that she remembers that she can't recall the last time she hesitated, stood rooted to one spot.

Everywhere she goes, the sun feels too bright, the air too dry, and every songbird sounds like an echo.

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She likes taking care of soldiers and patching up the wounded. She notices she has a soft spot for those who lose their sight, but doesn't dwell on it too much. She tries not to dwell on anything too much, because the things she likes or doesn't like sometimes feel like somebody else's tastes and she has no word for this feeling.

She doesn't mind it when they transfer her to the frontlines, loads of folks tell her she's brave, and she is, but she likes the front lines because she's busy all the time, because then she doesn't have to sleep, much—and not sleeping keeps the nightmares at bay.

It startles her when they first bring her in—no dog tags, no I.D., no picture of family, not even the standard letter that most soldiers carefully tuck away into their few belongings should anything happen to them. It's like this one knew she wasn't coming back. She has short, cropped hair and Ryuko thinks she might be pretty but she can't really tell because her features are obscured with bruises and cuts. When a pained moan rips from her mouth, it breaks Ryuko's heart.

She doesn't cry out in pain like the other ones do, not normally—Ryuko guesses it's a testament to her resolve. But she does howl every time they change the bandages on her mangled leg. Ryuko isn't squeamish and never has been, but she can't be in the room when they do it, instead opting to stand out in the hallway listening to the woman groan. It's like a song that clutches around her heart, squeezing, tugging, trying to persuade her to come back.

When the infection finally takes her and they wheel her out of the infirmary covered in a white sheet on a wheeled gurney, Ryuko sighs heavily. There wasn't much they could have done except administer morphine to ease the pain—she knows that, but somehow she feels as if it's her fault. She's standing in the hallway trying to forget the sound of that woman's cry when they pass. Her hand drops from beneath the sheet; limp but curled delicately as if waiting to be held. A shiver runs down Ryuko's spine.

Time is unforgiving to the wounded.

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Nightmares, daydreams, voices—these are the things she tacks off to her therapist.

“Maybe I'm schizophrenic,” she says, nervously chewing on her thumb. “I'm 27; I'm exhausted all the time. I can't sleep because I think if I do I'm going to fall into another world and sometimes they're not all bad. But there's this one where someone's just moaning in pain and I—I—I can't do anything for them!”

Her therapist jots down notes and nods in understanding. She's a kind-hearted, energetic thing whose basically been giving Ryuko sessions for free for the past year because her health insurance with her parents expired and she can't keep a steady job with medical benefits. Mostly, Ryuko tells her about her bad black outs, how she'll come out of them doing weird things like laughing to herself on a subway route she doesn't normally take, or finding herself jumping easily across rooftops for no apparent reason. Her therapist spends a lot of time looking sympathetic, slowly bobbing her coconut shaped haircut up and down.

It started when she was a teenager. She'd have these dreams that were more like movies—suddenly she knew how to perfectly handle a knife or find veins to insert needles. By the time she was a senior she'd already learned how to slip out of her parents' house, perfectly silent, traveling on feet that she knew were her own but moved with the age and grace of somebody much older. She couldn't finish college because by the time she was a sophomore an intense desire to continuously leave took root in her chest.

She has to schedule their next session on a different day than usual because she has an interview, which her therapist congratulates her on. When she comes by the next week, the door is closed and an embroidered sign is hanging from a hook that says, "Session happening; please wait". So Ryuko takes a seat, listening to the ticking of the clock as time runs over. She stands as she hears voices moving toward the door, but stops when the person who isn't her therapist responds in a smooth, high tone. The door opens with Ryuko rooted to the spot and an older woman bumps into her.

"I'm so sorry."

Immediately, Ryuko averts her gaze, trying to control her breathing. She feels like she's drowning on air, her hands suddenly slick with sweat; she tries to concentrate on the pattern of the carpet in front of her to keep from fainting, or worse: having a full blown panic attack. A calming touch from her therapist uproots her slightly.

"C'mon in, Ryuko," she says as she unknowingly guides Ryuko away from her source of simultaneous comfort and discomfort. Ryuko closes her eyes and she steps across the threshold, not knowing what would happen if she turned back like she wants to, but forcing herself to move forward. The therapist shuts the door and asks Ryuko what's wrong, startled by the lost gaze of her eyes and her shaky breath.

"I feel like I'm being haunted."

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It's kind of funny the way it happens.

Her nerd friend in high school plops a book down in front of her during homeroom one morning before resuming his façade of ignoring what ever is happening around him by staring idly at his phone. He doesn't say anything about it; he just gives it to her with no preamble, no explanation of the plot, not even some stupid snippet he's found out about the author.

It's a paperback with an unassuming cover, decorated with minimalistic graphic design. The name of the author is clearly a pen name because they lack a surname. The spine reads that it was written by someone named Jun.

Ryuko devours the book in a single sitting. Three days later she's gone through it a second time. She can't tell if it's an autobiography or fiction and she likes that, but its main protagonist is able to form small black holes that teleport her from one alternate universe to another always looking for the one she's meant to be with.

It means a lot to Ryuko because she's starting to have these dreams that she thinks might be memories, and she's starting to develop a certain skill set that she knows can't belong to any normal teenager. She asks her friend if he has any information about the author but he shrugs. The next day he hands her a book of poems, also written by "Jun".

"There's a P.O. Box where you can send fan mail, but I don't know anything about the author," he says, handing it to her. "What a weird pen name."

Ryuko doesn't care. This is her fifth life, as crazy as that sounds—but she knows it's true. This Jun, whoever they are, gave her the confidence to say that, because she knows these dreams are memories, and even though they scare her, just a little, she's grateful that somebody had the imagination to normalize her very distinct situation.

When she's older, she learns to just ponder, lets the stories of her past catch up to her. She jumps across rooftops to get away, knows that her lifelong feeling of wanderlust is part of some past she cannot fathom, and wonders why she feels like she knows the melody to some song nobody has ever sung to her.

She writes one letter to her mystery author, but never gets a response. It's enough, though. She pours over every word they write, buys copies of every collection of short stories, poems, and vignette that comes out.

The years between publications just feel like pauses in conversations with an old friend.

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"Ryuko."

"Hmm?"

"Ryuko!"

Her childhood friend elbows her side. "I'm awake! I'm awake!"

Satsuki chuckles at her as Ryuko rubs sleep from her eyes. Six. This is her sixth life. It wasn't until after she started dating her childhood sweetheart that Ryuko was able to phrase the experiences she was having. She yawns and stretches, trying to get a memory out of her bones (this one about stitches). As she brings her hands down she glances at Satsuki.

When they were five, Satsuki's family moved into her neighborhood, and Ryuko couldn't explain why she wanted to be so close to that girl whose voice sounded like a song every time she opened her mouth. In middle school, she whispered to Satsuki that she thought she might be gay, and Satsuki confessed feeling the same way about herself—they took solidarity in one another until Ryuko's girlfriend entered the picture. It wasn't until a year into her relationship with the pink haired girl that Ryuko realized, after dissecting her dreams and memories that the reason why she always felt drawn to Satsuki's voice, was because Satsuki was the one she'd been so haunted by.

But Ryuko was selfish and a coward and most of all skeptical. Why waste such a good thing on a maybe?

“C’mon, I can hear your wife from the kitchen grumbling about you not helping out,” Satsuki says, bouncing her goddaughter on her lap.

Ryuko rolls her eyes and plucks her kid out of Satsuki’s hands. She loves the little one, that’s for sure. And even though it’s not fair to her significant other, she always wonders what would have happened if she had remembered Satsuki sooner.

Her daughter giggles in her hands.

She’s wonders, but doesn’t wonder too hard.

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“No! Please, god. Please!”

She’s screaming and crying, her hand against Satsuki’s chest, trying to staunch the flow of blood, trying to keep it from dying her uniform maroon. Seven wasn’t supposed to be like this. She was supposed to remember her in seven so she could right the past six, but seven finds them in trenches, huddled together to keep the cold from taking their fingers and toes.

“Stay with me, please,” Ryuko cries as she grasps hold of Satsuki’s hand. She was so close. When she first heard that voice echo orders to her, she knew she could get through this timeline, but now? Now it’s all ripped away. Ryuko just wants to tell her she remembers, tell her that she’s been trying to make it right. She wants to tell her that she knows who she is and that Satsuki’s been haunting her for seven lifetimes now. Just please don’t give up now.

Satsuki eyes glaze over and she coughs once more.

“Ryuko,” she says, before her hand goes limp, still clenched in Ryuko’s palm. A strangled moan rips through her throat, out past her lips. Most of her platoon has fallen. She touches Satsuki’s palm to her forehead and cries. Seven wasn’t supposed to be like this.

She stands, not hearing her comrade yelling. He reaches for her, trying to pull her down but she feels like she’s moving underwater. All she can think about is seeing her again. She has to make it right. She was so close.

The resounding shot makes her helmet fly off.

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She doesn’t know how it starts. Eight is a fury of anger, a torrent of centuries worth of bitterness come crashing down on her like waves of an unrelenting ocean. It makes sense then that Satsuki could only respond in kind—the accompanying duet to Ryuko’s instrument of disaster. Maybe it was because their parents worked so much or because they lived in a rough neighborhood, but they were drawn together and in one another they stitched their bad habits. Intoxicated, skipping class, she burrows herself in the crook of Satsuki’s neck and breathes deep, inhales cigarette smoke and ash and something that is almost sweet.

She's all breath, biting, and nails—trails of welts left on the muscles of Ryuko's back look like a map of pent up aggression. It's a game they play when they're running teeth over collarbones and digging fingertips into forearms, where the winner is rewarded with the sweet sound of a lover's strangled moan. When Ryuko wins, it's like hearing an anthem announcing her arrival.

But it was inevitable that their bad habits would catch up to them, here. Eights ends with sirens.

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She wishes she could put nine and ten together to make one complete lifetime, but maybe that's asking for too much.

It's like she's almost getting it right, each time she remembers, and she does remember. Who else could be so lucky? But she doesn't feel lucky when she's 35 in ten, dwelling on nine. She's older in ten than she ever made it in nine and they still haven't met which scares her, because what if she isn't meant to meet her in every timeline? What if it was just a coincidence, the past nine? Is she really the same person, time after time?

When they do meet, in ten, Ryuko is so surprised and relieved that she can't help but laugh at how apologetic she is about everything. It does make a small part of her ache, though. With every sorry, it's like an apology for the times they went without, for being haunted by her ghost.

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Eleven is a bizarre symphony of her name spilling out of Satsuki's lips like a skipping record.

If she doesn't think about eleven, she doesn't have to remember that they were sisters then, too.

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Twelve is a nice break from eleven, and Ryuko thinks that maybe she's doing something right, this time. They go on short drives to hidden places where they tell each other fears and anxieties, and Ryuko almost tells her about what she's been experiencing, but... what if that means breaking some cosmic trust? What if it means never seeing her again and hearing that voice call her name?

They're sitting with the windows rolled down, parked on a hillside with the rolling ocean thundering underneath them, music playing from Ryuko's speakers. Satsuki has a penchant for singing in this life, part of the high school choir and all. Not all of her memories have flooded into her yet, but she thinks this is the first time she remembers her singing so freely.

Satsuki's eyes are closed and she's singing to the radio, feet up on Ryuko's dashboard. Her smile adds a lilt to her song and her voice flits through the car like the summer breeze passing through the open windows. She wants to listen to this forever, but she can't help herself.

Ryuko kisses her on the mouth and it makes Satsuki stop, tense in her shoulders, like she's suddenly remembered something very important.

“What’s the matter? I’m not that bad am I? Oi, you look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

It takes her a second, but Satsuki comes back to her with a smile.

“Geek. Do that again.”

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Thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen feel like penance for crimes she doesn't remember committing.

The ship she lives on in thirteen feels like a wooden trap, but she's convinced she needs to stay on it because this is the only way she could ever hope to find her. Rain whips around the mast as she scales the slick, drenched wooden beam to her perch in the crow's nest, taking her shift for the night. As she hugs her knees to her chest, she thinks she sees the outline of another ship, far off on the horizon, but it could be a trick of the rain.

How can she sit still, knowing she might be out there?

She suddenly remembers something she learned in another life, a story of myths she had to read once.

She understands why sailors would drown in a Siren's arms.

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Fourteen is dry, stale.

It casts a shadow of doubt across her entire story, a monument to the uncertainty of her situation. She is afforded every opportunity to move past her, but Ryuko refuses to settle. Fourteen—she didn't make it to fourteen to settle for somebody who couldn't keep her down.

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Fifteen is all about escaping. Running from something, either hiding or chasing and Ryuko is part of a small percentage of the population that must hide. Her memories come late in fifteen; no doubt due to the lack of sleep and constant movement necessary for life in fifteen.

By then it seems only logical—twisted, surely, but logical. Right? Why keep running when she has this feeling that somebody is waiting for her if only she could just... escape? Why risk the day-to-day evils of this life if all she had to do was pull the trigger?

It isn't until she knows she's backed herself into a corner, when she shuts the door and hears them coming, that she resigns to do it. How could she? She'd never given up before—but then again, no other life was fifteen until now. Pounding on the shut door startles her, they scream for her.

It could be easy. Ryuko doesn't even know what music sounds like, here. She just wants the screaming to stop.

Shakily, she wraps her mouth around the one gun she carries. She breathes hard and fast through her nose, tears streaming down her face. This is the only way. This is how it has to happen. The pounding on the door escalates to its creaking, bound to give way soon. She clenches her eyes shut.

She needs to hear her voice again, she reasons. She'll see her again—it's a cop out, but she'll see her again. The door shudders violently. Her teeth dig into the metal barrel of the gun and her thumb wraps around the trigger.

The last thing she thinks she hears is her name being echoed through time.

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"I'll be good. I promise."

It's one of the things she whispers to herself when she feels put out. Sixteen is pretty boring—stale, like fourteen, but with the nightmares of fifteen always looming so shallowly under the surface of her memories, Ryuko cannot help but promise to be good.

She lives a simple life, traveling. Something in her tells her that she won't run into her, not this time. Not after the cop out she pulled last time. But still.

How could she ever settle for anybody else?

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"I can't hold that thing!"

"Just try! And it's not a thing, it's a child, like you!"

Ryuko looks at the little girl with wide eyes as if it were more an alien than anything else. Satsuki places the baby into Ryuko's arms carefully before standing back. Ryuko squirms as the child makes a cooing noise, her face contorting into a grimace when she hiccups. Satsuki leans against her kitchen counter and cocks her head to one side when Ryuko, whose muscles seem to have a memory of their own, shift the baby and cradles her in the crook of her elbow, natural and fluid.

"It's like you're a natural at that," Satsuki says. "Don't drop her, Matoi."

It isn't until a few months later, when she's about to graduate from high school that Ryuko remembers six, nine, ten, and twelve. She knows that lifetimes without her are painful, but this is a lifetime where she's with somebody else, happy, content; that's different.

Seventeen. But Ryuko can't say for sure that Satsuki doesn't care about her, because she does. And maybe that's enough, to know that there are different types of love in this world.

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“Grande, green tea frapp, light on the whip, please.”

Ryuko looks up, snatching the headphones out of her ears with a yank. She knows that voice. Trying to be sneaky, she leans her body outside of the queue to look towards the customer currently ordering. She strains her ears.

“Thank you,” she says as the cashier hands her the receipt. Ryuko sucks in a breath. It’s her. It has to be. Stupidly, she glances at her watch, as if memorizing this time and date will help her in any other circumstance. She keeps her head on a swivel and watches the woman sit before taking out a book and reading. When Ryuko gets to the counter, the big, angry looking barista grunts at her.

“I want an iced coffee, medium,” she says, fudging the name of the size on purpose. “And no room.” She sneaks a glance back at the woman sitting down, before flashing a five and putting it in the tip jar. “And I want the name of the woman over there.”

“Matoi, you know we don’t give out information about customers,” he says to her. She puts another five in his tip jar. “It’s Satsuki.”

He turns away as she grins.

She comes in everyday (even on the weekends) at the same time for two weeks. She sees Satsuki on three occasions, but she’s always with a coworker or friend. Ryuko knows they’re a friend because of the way they talk about their love life and the way said conversation just makes Satsuki sit there, staring off into some middle ground space between the two of them.

It’s not until two weeks later that she catches Satsuki by herself, book in front of her, but staring off idly into the distance. Ryuko goes to place her order and the angry looking barista just grunts at her in recognition. She thinks he has the twitch of a smile, but maybe that’s a muscle spasm. She’s glad she wore her clean shirt today, she thinks to herself, as she goes over to Satsuki’s table.

“Is this seat taken?”

Satsuki looks up at her and Ryuko swallows to prevent her breath from catching in her throat.

“No,” she says. And that’s it. It’s that voice—the one that she knows she dreams about, the one that feels like a word she doesn’t know but can describe and define. It’s the song that she looks for in all other songs, the tone she thinks has chased her through time.

She sits down in front of her, grinning when Satsuki regards her with mild interest, a smile beginning to lift the corner of her lips.

“You by yourself? You’re really pretty, you know that?”

She says it because she knows she can’t mess up. Whatever this is, this chasing and running, this searching—she knows she can’t mess up now.

The barista calls her name and she gets up, shooting her a grin before fetching their beverages. When she comes back, she hands a green tea frapp to Satsuki, whose eyebrow

quirks up in surprise.

“I see you come in here sometimes,” she shrugs. Suddenly embarrassed, she adds, “Not like I’m stalking you or some bullshit.” She blushes. “I mean, pardon my French. But you know. I’ve seen you around.”

Satsuki just smiles, and holds out her hand. “Satsuki.”

Ryuko tries to force down some smug retort like, “I know.” Instead she takes her hand, feeling as though the gesture spans years and centuries.

“Ryuko.”

Eighteen feels like coming home after a long day.

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She pads over lightly to the couch, where Satsuki is laying, breath steady and soft. This is nineteen—steady, soft, nobody running around trying to find somebody else, no bullets, no dying, not even trying too hard to make up for lost time. This is just... nineteen.

“Satsuki.”

“Hmm?”

Ryuko stands over Satsuki, a mug of tea in her hand. The other woman sits up and before she takes the mug, Ryuko moves in to kiss her.

“Did you fall asleep?”

“No,” she hums. Ryuko sits next to her, leaning her head against her shoulder, hearing her take sips. Every sound Satsuki makes, Ryuko tries to commit it to memory.

“What do you think about reincarnation?” she asks suddenly. She doesn’t know why she asks; it just comes out. She’s curious and it’s not like she’s breaking any rules. Satsuki shrugs and Ryuko just laughs because what else was she going to answer?

“No, I’m serious! Like, do you think I was dinosaur in a past life?” she says, grasping for conversation. It causes Satsuki to breathe a loud puff of short laughter. Another sound to add to the list.

“Oh, you’re serious,” she says, furrowing her brow. “No, you were definitely a pig in a past life.”

Ryuko rolls her eyes, tries to draw on something she knows remembers. “I bet I was like, a badass ninja.”

“Sure, maybe you were an assassin,” Satsuki offers, smiling. It almost makes Ryuko flinch. That was the first time she called her name, and Ryuko had almost forgotten about it. She tries to hide her grimace with a laugh.

“I bet I fucking kicked ass. I bet I kicked your ass!”

She watches as Satsuki rolls her eyes and drinks her tea before she sets it down on the coffee table in front of them. She hardly has to wait before Satsuki is motioning for her to sit in her lap, so she goes over to straddle her hips and hook her wrists around her neck. She rests her forehead against Satsuki's, inhaling the scent of her.

“Do you think we'd recognize each other?” she whispers, trying not to sound sad.

Satsuki hums before answering, the tone ringing against Ryuko, through her arms and down her spine.

“I'd always recognize you.”

“Good,” Ryuko says, hopes. She closes the distance between them. “I'm not good with faces, so you better recognize me.”

Satsuki chuckles and nudges at Ryuko's neck with her nose before placing a kiss there. Ryuko sighs, regrets having started the conversation because it pulls something at her that can only be held down by Satsuki. Almost as if she knows, Satsuki pulls away and looks her in the eye.

“Ah, I chased you through this life,” Satsuki says, wrapping her arms against Ryuko's waist. It twists something in her gut, but she smiles anyway. “I'll chase you through twenty and twenty five and fifty and a hundred. I'd chase you through a hundred lives until you remembered my face.”

“Sap,” Ryuko laughs, once again closing the distance between their lips.

If that were true, she'd match her time and time again.

End Notes

(Original end note) So, as you may have guessed, this is a companion piece to "Chase Me Through the Streets of Time" but it's written to be read as a stand alone, which is why the two aren't paired. You can read one or the other first, it doesn't matter. Or maybe it does? I can't tell. If I could get some feedback, maybe I'll connect the two as part of a series.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!